

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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R 072346Z JAN 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, UR

SUBJECT: 1950 BALTIC SEA INCIDENT

1. IN DECEMBER 9 LETTER TO SECRETARY SENATOR CHURCH ASKED THAT DEPARTMENT INQUIRE WITH SOVIET GOVERNMENT "FOR WHAT-EVER INFORMATION IT HAS ABOUT THE CRASH AND THE FATE OF THE CREW" OF PB4Y-2 DOWNED OVER BALTIC SEA ON APRIL 8, 1950.

IN VIEW OF SENATOR'S REQUEST AND RECENT CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC INTEREST IN THIS INCIDENT EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO DELIVER TO MFA NOTE TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS BELOW. EMBASSY SHOULD EXPLAIN THAT UNLIKE EARLIER US INQUIRIES (EMBASSY

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NOTES TO MFA OF JULY 16, 1956 AND SEPT. 28, 1973) AND

SOVIET REPLIES (MFA NOTES OF AUG 13, 1956 AND JAN 14, 1974), WHICH FOCUSED ON WHETHER ANY OF CREW WAS IN USSR, PRESENT REQUEST CONCERNS WHAT HAPPENED TO CREW TO ENABLE DEPARTMENT TO REPLY AS COMPREHENSIVELY AS POSSIBLE TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION BY THE FAMILIES, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND WISHES TO INFORM THE MINISTRY THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO RECEIVE NUMEROUS INQUIRIES FROM PRIVATE AMERICAN CITIZENS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS CONCERNING THE AIRCRAFT AND CREW OF THE US NAVY AIRPLANE PB4Y-2,

NUMBER 59645, WHICH WAS LOST OVER THE BALTIC SEA ON APRIL 8, 1950. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THIS AIRCRAFT WAS THE ONE TO WHICH THE MINISTRY REFERRED IN ITS NOTE TO THE EMBASSY OF APRIL 11, 1950.

IN ITS RESPONSE OF JANUARY 14, 1974 TO EMBASSY NOTE NUMBER 1159 OF SEPTEMBER 28, 1973, THE MINISTRY INDICATED THAT NONE OF THE CREWMEN OF THIS AIRCRAFT WERE ON THE TERRITORY OF THE SOVIET UNION.

SENATOR FRANK CHURCH HAS NOW REQUESTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE APPROACH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USSR WITH A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THE FATE OF THE CREWMEN IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE FAMILIES OF THE CREW MEMBERS WITH THIS INFORMATION, PARTICULARLY AS IT RELATES TO PERIODIC RUMORS OF THE CREW'S SURVIVAL. A LIST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CREW OF THIS AIRCRAFT IS ATTACHED FOR THE MINISTRY'S INFORMATION.

THE EMBASSY WOULD THEREFORE GREATLY APPRECIATE RECEIVING FROM THE MINISTRY ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO PROVIDE CONCERNING THE FATE OF THE CREW OF THE US NAVY AIRCRAFT. END OF TEXT.

3. LIST OF CREW:

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, THE CREW OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY PRIVATEER WHEN IT DEPARTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR ITS FLIGHT OVER THE HIGH SEAS OF THE BALTIC CONSISTED OF THE FOLLOWING UNITED STATES NAVY PERSONNEL, ALL NATIONALS OF THE UNITED STATES:

NAME RANK SERIAL NUMBER

FETTE, JOHN H. LT. 320676 USNR
SEESCHAF, HOWARD W. LT. 264095 USN

REYNOLDS, ROBERT D. LT. JG 368573 USN
BURGESS, TOMMY L. ENS. 506762 USN
DANENS JR., JOE H. AD1 3685438 USN
THOMAS, JACK W. AD1 2242750 USN
BECKMAN, FRANK L. AT1 2799076 USN
PURCELL, EDWARD J. CT3 2540438 USN
RINNIAR JR., JOSEPH NORRIS AT3 2542600 USN
BOURASSA, JOSEPH JAY AL3 9539864 USN

4. COPY OF SENATOR CHURCH'S LETTER AND DEPARTMENT RESPONSE BEING POUCHED. KISSINGER

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Disposition Authority: morefirh
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